Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9810

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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USLO PEKING

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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR GALBRAITH

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT EGEN ID

SUBJ: INDONESIA: CURRENT OUTLOOK: PART 1

REF: JAKARTA 13305

1. SUMMARY: THIS IS THE FIRST OF A TWO PART TELEGRAM ATTEMPTING TO ASSESS TRENDS IN INDONESIA WHICH BEAR ON US POLICY. THIS FIRST MESSAGE IS ENTIRELY MINE; THE SECOND IS A STAFF EFFORT WHICH I HAVE TAMPERED WITH ONLY SLIGHTLY. AMONG THE YOUNGER FOLLOWERS OF THE MISSION, WHO QUITE NATURALLY ARE IN TOUCH WITH YOUNGER INDONESIANS, THERE IS A FEELING THAT THE DISCONTENT AMONG YOUTH IS BOTH DEEPER AND MORE CONFIDENTIAL

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DANGEROUS THAN PERHAPS I OR OTHER, MORE SENIOR

OFFICERS, YET BELIEVE. HOWEVER, I DO NOT THINK THEIR
CONVICTION NOR WHATEVER DIFFERENCE OF EMPHASIS THERE
IS BETWEEN THEM AND THOSE OF US WHO HAVE ACCESS TO A
BROADER SPECTRUM OF INFORMATION COULD YET BE
CLASSIFIED AS DISSENTING VIEWS. WE ARE ALL INTRIGUED
BY THESE EARLY EVIDENCES OF INDONESIAN YOUTH TRYING
TO REASSERT ITSELF AND WE ARE ALL TRYING TO ADD IT
UP TO BALANCED AND SUPPORTABLE CONCLUSIONS. THIS
MESSAGE AND ITS COMPANION ARE AN EFFORT TO ASSESS EARLY
SIGNS OF DISSENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INDONESIAN
GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL PERFORMANCE. END SUMMARY

- 2. AS INDONESIA SHAKILY COMPLETES ITS FIRST 5-YEAR
 PLAN AND UNCERTAINLY BEGINS ITS SECOND THIS IS A CONVENIENT
 TIME TO TAKE STOCK. FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS SUHARTO AND
 THE OTHER MILITARY MEN AND CIVILIANS (MAINLY THE GROUP
 OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS KNOWN AS THE TECHNOCRATS)
 WHO COMPRISE THE "NEW ORDER" INDONESIAN LEADERSHIP,
 HAVE DEVOTED THEIR EFFORTS TO ASSURING SECURITY, DEVELOPMENT OF
 THE ECONOMY, CONSOLIDATION OF POLITICAL CONTROL
 AND THE REFURBISHING OF INDONESIA'S IMAGE AMONG
 NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES IN THE REGION AND IN WORLD
 COUNCILS.
- 3. COMBINING GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT AID
 RECEIVED THROUGH THE IGGI AND INVESTMENT FROM
 ABROAD AND FROM DOMESTIC ENTREPRENEURS (THE LATTER
 (LARGELY DOMESTIC CHINESE) THE SUHARTO GOVERNMENT HAS
 SUCCEEDED IN TURNING A MORIBUND ECONOMY INTO A
 LIVE AND GROWING ONE, IN RESTORING AND ADDING TO
 AN INFRASTRUCTURE (ROADS, RAILROADS, COMMUNICATIONS
 SYSTEMS, AIRLINES, POWER, SHIPPING, ETC) THAT WAS
 ALL BUT AT A STANDSTILL, AND IN GVING THEIR CURRENCY,
 WHICH WAS NEXT TO WORTHLESS, A STABLE VALUE.
- 4. SUHARTO AND THE OTHER GENERALS WHO CONTROL
 GOVERNMENT POLICIES HAVE CONCENTRATED ALSO ON CLEANSING THE
 ARMED FORCES AND THE GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY OF
 THOSE WHO WERE, OR SUSPECTED OF HAVING BEEN, PART OF
 THE EXTENDED NETWORK OF THE INDONESIAN COMMUNIST
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PARTY (PKI) WHICH HAD BECOME DOMINANT INFLUENCE UNDER SUKARNO AND WHICH CAME CLOSE TO TURNINR OVER POWER IN SEPTEMBER 1965. THE PKI AND AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS WERE DISBANDED AND OUTLAWED. AND EVEN NON-COMMUNIST POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE BEEN REGROUPED AND BROUGHT CLOSELY UNDER GOVERNMENT INFLUENCE AND CONTROL.

5. BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POWER IS HELD FIRMLY IN THE TOP ECHELONOF MILITARY LEADERSHIP. AN EXTENSIVE STATE HOLDING OF ENTERPRISES TAKEN OVER FROM THE DUTCH(RUBBER AND OTHER ESTATES, TIN AND OTHER MINING, OIL, HOTELS, COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS, ETC) ARE FOR THE MOST PART RUN BY THOSE SECONDED FROM THE MILITARY. MOST OF THE GOVERNORS OF THE 26 PROVINCES AND A GREAT MANY BUPATI(COUNTY) AND DISTRICT HEADS ARE LIKEWISE SECONDED FROM THE MILITARY. AND MANY, IF NOT MOST, OF THOSE WHO HOLD MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICE ARE ALSO ENGAGED IN BUSINESS, FREQUENTLY AS PARTNERS WITH INDIGENOUS CHINESE WHO ARE THE MOST ABLE AND SUCCESSFUL OF THE INDONESIAN ENTREPRENEURIAL CLASS.

6. THUS FAR THERE HAS BEEN REMARKABLY LITTLE DISSENT WITH THE SUHARTO GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES AND PROGRAMS EVEN FROM FORMER POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS SHORN OF THEIR POWER. IT IS TRUE THAT SUCH DISSENT AS THERE WAS HAS HAD DIFFICUTLY MAKING ITSELF HEARD WHERE PARLIAMENT IS HAD PICKED AND THE PRESS SUBJECT TO STRICT GUIDANE ON ENSITIVE TOPICS. BUT THERE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN, AND THERE PROBABLY STILL IS, A BROAD, THOUGH PASSIVE CONSENSUS OF AGREEMENT THAT THE SUHARTO GOVERNMENT WAS DOING WHAT DESPERATELY NEEDED TO BE DONE.

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR GALBRAITH

7. MORE RECENTLY SOME SIGNS OF DISSATISFACTION HAVE ARISEN. ON AUGUST 5 IN BANDUNG AN ALTERCATION OVER A MINOR COLLISION BETWEEN A CAR CARRYING CHINESE YOUTH AND A HORSE CART DRIVEN BY A POOR INDONESIAN TURNED INTO AN ANTI-CHINESE RIOT DESTROYING MILLIIONS OF DOLLARS WORTH OF PROPERTY AND CAUSING THE REGIME MUCH EMBARRASSMENT AT THE COMPLETE BREAKDOWN OF SECURITY FOR MOST OF ONE DAY. ANALYSISTS OF THIS EVENT AGREE THAT IR WAS BROUGHT ABOUT BY A COMPLEX OF ELEMENTS OF ECONOMIC DISSATISFACTION, MOSLEM DISGRUNTLEMENT, RESENTMENT AGAINST THE ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES ENJOYED BY THE CHINESE AND, POSSIBLY, EVEN SOME LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT BY PARTS OF THE MILITARY. CONFIDENTIAL

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8. MOSLEM DISSATISFACTION AND DISGRUNTLEMENT RESIDES PARTICULARLY IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FORMER MASJUMI PARTY (WHICH IS OUTLAWED) ALTHOUGH IT EXTENDS TO OTHER MOSLEM FROUPINGS WHO ALSO FEEL LEFT OUT OF THINGS. AMONG THESE MOSLEM POLITICAL ELEMENTS ARE MANY OF THE INDONESIAN ETHNIC (AS CONTRASED WITH CHINESE) ENTREPRENEURS WHO FEEL THREATENED BY THE MORE SUCCESSFUL FOREIGN AND CHINESE INVESTORS (THE LATTER WITH THEIR PARTNERS AMONG THE GENERALS). THIS DISSATISFACTION AND DISGRUNTLEMENT FOUND SOME VOICE RECENTLY IN MOSLEM EXPRESSING OUTRAGE OVER A GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED MARRIAGE BILL WHICH, AT LAST IN MOSLEM EYES, WOULD HAVE DEPRIVED MOSLEM LEADERS OF SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE.

9. AND EVEN MORE RECENTLY, UNIVERSITY YOUTH, PERHAPS EMBOLDENED BY THE SUCCESS OF THOSE WHO BROUGHT THE GOVERNMENT DOWN IN BANGKOK, HAVE RAISED THEIR VOICE AGAINST CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT AND AGAINST THE FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND AID WHICH THEY SEE AS

CONNECTED. (IT IS A REASONABLE GUESS THAT HOLDOVERS FROM THOSE WHO SUPPORTED THE ANTI-FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND AID POLICIES OF THE FORMER, SUKARNO REGIME ARE BEHIND SOME OF THESE EXPRESSIONS.)

10. THE SUHARTO GOVERNMENT HAS SO FAR RESPONDED INTELLIGENTLY TO THESE VOICES OF DISSENT. IT HAS POSTPONED THE ADOPTION OF A MARRIAGE BILL (EVEN THOUGH IT COULD PUSH IT THROUGH PARLIAMENT OF IT WISHED) PENDING AN ATTEMPT TO AMEND IT TO THE SATISFACTION OF THOSE OPPOSED. IT HAS INITIATED INTENSIVE DIALOGUE WITH THE UNIVERSITY YOUTH SEEKING TO CREATE BETTER UNDERSTANDING. AND IT IS AS INDEFATIGUABLE AS EVER AT DOING WHAT IT CAN TO INSURE AGAINST EVEN TEMPORARY BREAKDOWNS OF LAW AND ORDER.

11. BUT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE LITTLE IF ANYTHING TO ELIMINATE THE CORRUPTION AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST THAT ARE ENDEMIC IN THE SUHARTO REGIME. BAD AS CORRUPTION IS, WE SO NOT THINK IT HAS YET REACHED SUCH PROPORTIONS CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT IT IS AN INSUPERABLE OBSTACLE TO DEVELOPMENT. BUT IT IS CERTAINLY A POLITICAL ACHILLES HEEL THAT WILL INVITE MORE DISSENT AND OTHER MANIFESTATIONS OF DISSATISFACTION BY YOUTH AND OTHERS WHO FEEL LEFT OUT OF THE MORE FAVORED ESTABLISHMENT.

12. SOME OF THIS DISSATISFACTION IS LIKELY TO BE DIRECTED AT FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND TO HAVE OTHER XENOPHOBIC CONTENT. PARTLY THIS WILL DERIVE FROM THE FACT THAT ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL, SUCCESSFUL AND OSTENTATIOUSLY RICH OF THE GENERALS, IBNU SUTOWO, RUNS THE OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE AND ASSOCIATED CONGLOMERATE KNOWN AS PERTAMINA. ASSOCIATED WITH IT IN PRODUCTION SHARING CONTRACTS ARE THE LARGEST NUMBER OF FOREIGN, MAINLY AMERICAN, INVESTORS. PERTAMINA ILLUSTRATES SOME OF THE BEST AND SOME OF THE WORST ASPECTS OF THE SUHARTO REGIME. IT HAS DOUBLED INDONESIA'S OWN SYSTEM OF DISTRIBUTION OF PETROLUEM PRODUCTS AND MADE THERBY AN IMPORANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF INDONESIA'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS. AND, THOUGH PROBABLY AT MORE THEN NECESSARY COSTS, IT HAS INTRODUCED CNETERS OF EFFICIENCY AND ECONOMIC ACCOMPLISHMENT, ENTIRELY RUN BY INDONESIANS, INTO THE INDONESIAN SCENE WHERE FEW OF THSE EXISTED BEFORE. BUT IBNU SUTOWO RUNS THIS STATE-OWNED OIL COMPANY LIKE IT WAS HIS OWN. IN FACT, INDICATIONS ARE THAT HE HAS BUILT WITHIN AND ALONGSIDE PERTAMINA HIS OWN BUSINESS EMPIRE AND

BECOME A MULTI-MILLIONARE HIMSELF AS HE UPPED THE GOVERNMENT'S INCOME BY HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS. HIS LARGESS WITH SUH
OTO AND OTHER GENERALS APPEAR TO
ASSURE HIM OF IMMUNITY TO DCENSORSHIP AND THE
NECESSARY BACKING TO DEFY ALL CRITICS
(WHO INCLUDE
THE LESS FLAMBOYANT, MORE HONEST AND AUSTERE
TECHNOCRATS).

13. ANOTHER LIKELY TARGET OF DISSATISFACTION IS THE PALACEITSELF. THE PRESIDENT AND HIS WIFE (SHE PROBABLY MORE THAN HIM BUT PRESUMABLY WITH HIS CONFIDENTIAL

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KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT)

AND MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILY
AND OFFICAL ADVISORS AND ASSISTANTS, ARE NOTORIOUS
FOR THEIR DEALS WITH CHINESE BUSINESSMEN WHO PAY
HANDSOMELY FOR GOVERNMENT PERMITS, CREDIT, CONTRACTS,
AND MONOPOLIES. THE LUXURIOUS LIFE STYLE SET BY
THE PALACE, BY IBNU SUTOWO AND BY OTHER WELL PLACED
GENERALS HAS BECOME CONTAGIOUS AND WIVES, ESPECIALLY,
VIE WITH ONE ANOTHER TO PUT ON THE MOST LAVISH
WEDDINGS, TO TAKE THEIR FAMILIES ON TRIPS AROUND
THE WORLD, AND TO BUILD AND FURNISH THE MOST
LUXURIOUS HOMES.

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR GALBRAITH

14. DISTASTEFUL AS MUCH OF THIS IS AND QUESTIONABLE
AS SOME OF SUHARTO'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PRACTICES
MAY SEEM IN THE LIGHT OF OUR STANDARDS, THEY ARE
OVERWHELMINGLY INDONESIAN IN CHARACTER AND ARE
UNDERSTANDABLE AND EXPLAINABLE IN THE INDONESIAN
CONTEXT. SUHARTO AND HIS COTERIE OF GENERALS
ARE DETERMINED TO PUT INDONESIA ON ITS FEET ECONOMICALLY
AND TO UNIFY AND DIRECT ITS IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL
ORIENTATION. AND WHILE THERE WILL BE DISSENTERS AND
MAL-CONTENTS, THERE WILL BE JUST ENOUGH FREEDOM FOR
PARLIAMENT AND PRESS TO MAKE THEM FEEL THEY CAN BE
HEARD(AND TO ALERT THE GOVERNMENT TO POTENTIAL
TROUBLE MAKERS) BUT NOT ENOUGH FOR THINGS TO BECOME
UNSTUCK. AND I DO NOT SEE ANY POTENTIAL FOR ORGANIZED
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OR CONCERTED OPPOSTION UNLESS AND UNTIL THE UNITY AND SUPPORT OF THE MILITARY IS BROKEN. SUHARTO AND HIS PRINCIPAL COHORTS GIVE THIS MATTER THEIR FIRST AND CONSTANT ATTENTION. AND THE MILITARY AS A WHOLE IS THE MOST ECONOMICALLY PRIVILEGED GROUP IN THE COUNTRY. EVEN AT THE LOWEST LEVELS THEY ARE SEVERAL TIMES BETTER OFFTHAN THE AVERAGE INDONESIAN. THEY ARE LIKELY TO JOCKEY FOR POSITION IN RELATION TO EACH OTHER BUT RALLY TOGETHER AGAINST ANY THREAT FROM OUTSIDE THE MILITARY.

15. MY EXPECTATION IS, THERFORE, THAT THE MILITARY-BASED SUHARTO REGIME WILLCONTINUE TO HOLD POWER, EXERCISING IT AS IT HAS SO FAR WTIH SUFFICIENT DILUTION OF CIVILIAN PARTICIPATION AND FLEXIBILITY AND LOOSENESS OF CONTROL TO CONTAIN AND SOFTEN DISSENT, ESPECIALLY

IN AN ERA WHEN INDONESIAN PRODUCTS ARE LIKELY TO BRING GOOD PRICES AND INDONESIANS AS A WHOLE CAN ENJOY THEIR BENIGN AND GENEROUS ENVIRONMENT IN SECURITY AND SOME DEGREE OF RELAIVELY GREATER PROSPERITY. I WOULD EXPECT THE SHORT-TERM INDONESIAN OUTLOOK TO BE ONE OF STABILITY AND FURTHER ECONOMIC GROWTH, AND FOR INDONESIA TO REMAIN A FAVORABLE SITE FOR FOREIGN INVESTMENT. AS INDICATED IN JAKARTA TEL 13305 THE INDONESIANS WILLIN FUTURE PROBABLY SCRUTINIZE INVESTMENT PRPOSALS MORE CLOSELY AND EVALUATE THEM MORE STRICTLY FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THEIR DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO INDONESIAN EMPLOYMENT, PARTICIPATION AND PROFITABILITY. AND THEY MAY WELL SEEK REVISION MORE FAVORABLY TO THEM OF CONTRACTURAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH HAVE GIVEN THE FOREIGN INVESTOR A FASTER PAY OFF THAN WAS ORIGINALLY CONTEMPLATED AND WINDFALL PROFITS BEYOND THOSE FORESEEN.

16. THE NEW AID LEGISLATION NOW BEFORE CONGRESS MAY BE FORTUITOUS IN ITS EMPHASIS ON AID PROJECTS IN THE SOCIAL (EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS) SECTORS, IE, TO THE EXTENT IT CAN INSPIRE AND REINFORCE THE GOI IN ITS OWN EFFORTS IN THESE FOELDS, IT WILL BE A GOOD THING. THE DIFFICULTY WILL BE IN IMPLEMENTING AN AID PROGRAM IN THESE FIELDS WITHOUT CONFIDENTIAL

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REQUIRING PROLIFERATION OF OUR AID STAFF AND RAISING OUR PROFILE IN AN ATMOSPHERE ALREADY BEGINNING TO SHOW SIGNS OF SOME SURFEIT OF FOREIGNERS. THE GOI WILL, HOWEVER MUCH IT WANTS THE PRESENCE OF FOREIGN AID AND INVESTMENT, REFRAIN FROM DEFENDING OUR PRESENCE. THIS RETICENCE IS WELL UNDERSTOOD BY THOSE DISCONTENTED YOUTH, DISGRUNTLED MOSLEMS,

UNREPENTANT SUKARNOISTS AND YUGOSLAV-INSPIRED SOCIALISTS WHO FEELTHE URGE TO CRITICISE AND IT WILL TO SOME EXTENT INSPIRE THEM TO EXPLOIT THIS CONVENIENT SOUNDING BOARD FOR THEIR COLLECTIVE COMPLAINTS.

17. IN THE LONGER TERM, INDONESIANS WILL HAVE TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS OF MALDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH, MISUSE OF POLITICAL POWER FOR PERSONAL GAIN, OVER-CENTRALIZATION, MANAGERIAL INEFFICEINCY AND CORRUPTION TO AN EXTENT THAT WILLPREVENT THE FURTHER BUILD-UP OF DISCONTENT, LEST THERE BE AN EVENTUAL POLITICAL EXPLOSION THAT WILL DESTROY WHAT HAS BEEN BUILT. ONLY THE INDONESIANS CAN DO THIS FOR THEMSELVES. MEANWHILE OUR ROLE IS TO INSURE THAT

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